

A2012-68

November 19, 2001

RECEIVED

Docket No. 1382525-25986 Appealing Closure of Spring Dale, WV Post Office.

2011 NOV 29 P 12: 22

To Whom It Amy Concern:

As a member of the Concerned Citizens for The Spring Dale Post Office, I wish to exercise my right to show the Postal Service is exempting itself from the law regarding most rural post office closures, including this one. There is a frenzy to close post offices, and therefore the Postal Service has lost respect for the law and the customers.

POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
SECRETARY

During the entire closure process, the Postal Service repeatedly assured all of the customers that they were going to carefully hear and respect our rights and concerns. Those in the citizens group encouraged customers to have faith in the system, but most of them would not agree. Most customers admitted that the law did require the Postal Service to hear us, but they still believed the decision to close us had already been decided. These customers had watched the news enough to learn the truth. How could it be that a certain 3700 post offices were selected to close, but the customers who used those 3700 post offices had not yet been heard? This shows we wasted our time and have no protection regardless of how hard we try to explain good reasons to keep our post office open.

I am enclosing a newspaper article published today in the Register-Harold. It concerns another post office near here, but adds additional proof of the treatment Spring Dale customers have complained about. It is alleged by certain postal employees in other offices that they have been warned to not speak against closure at public meetings or elsewhere. Our Postmaster was not allowed to speak until almost all of those at the meeting had left, and she was interrupted then. Our lawyer sent the Postal Service a letter which explains many errors and misconduct by the Postal Service.

We never gave up because we knew the Postal Regulatory Commission could hear our appeal. We realize the Postal Regulatory Commission cannot keep us open, but it could have the Postal Service review our issues more seriously.

I have included in this appeal a printout from the 'Montgomery News' concerning the Postal Regulatory Commission's denial of an appeal for the Gwynedd post office. The article mentions unacceptable faults in the closing process, but instead of permitting the public to have the dignity of a reasonable doubt, the Commission decided the Postal Service had minimally satisfied its requirements. The article indicates the Commission reprimanded the Postal Service, but more recent cases, including ours, is full of evidence that it did no good.

The official record does not adequately reveal the efforts we made in the defense of our post office. Considering the many issues raised by us, please have the Postal Service reconsider its decision to close the Spring Dale, WV post office.



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Received

NOV 28 2011

Office of PAGR

Rep. Rahall: Postal actions extremely disappointing

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Rep. Nick Rahall called the U.S. Postal Service's chief operating officer (COO) and executive vice president Friday to express his extreme disappointment about the announcement of a final decision to close the Bluefield mail processing facility and cited the poor handling of postal closure public meetings occurring throughout southern West Virginia as further evidence that the Postal Service is being dismissive of the needs and concerns of rural citizens.

"My constituents are very upset about the closure of the Bluefield processing center, and I am convinced that it further cements the impression of many that these public meetings are merely for show, and that their concerns are not being taken seriously," Rahall told the COO.

"In many areas of my district, there is no cell phone service, no Blackberries, no Internet. Residents and businesses depend on their post office for basic communications, for sending letters, paying bills, receiving medication. When my constituents try to make these points, many of them think the Postal Service has turned a deaf ear to their concerns."

Rahall read to the Postal Service's second ranking official from an article in the Pocahontas Times that contained a host of concerns voiced by citizens attending a public meeting on the closure of the Buckeye Post Office in Pocahontas County and indicating that the postal official in charge of the meeting was uninterested and dismissive.

Rahall's phone call to the COO follows a letter he recently sent to the postmaster general about whether the Postal Service can appropriately manage public feedback when so many postal closures are happening at once.

"The complaints from West Virginians have become so frequent that it prompted my letter to the postmaster general on Oct. 31, in which I questioned whether these public meetings are truly accomplishing their purpose, which is to solicit feedback from the public, or are, instead, just perfunctory exercises — just for show — as the post office bulldozes ahead closing valued postal facilities," said Rahall.

To further underscore his point, Rahall noted that the same Pocahontas Times story contained references to an incident involving a letter the congressman himself had sent to local residents.

According to the paper, Buckeye resident and former Pocahontas County Prosecuting Attorney Walt Weiford attempted to read a letter from Rahall, addressed to those in attendance. But the postal official in charge of the meeting tried to stop Weiford, saying "Rahall's letters are all the same." Weiford, however, insisted that he be allowed to continue.

"I find it outrageous to hear that a U.S. Postal official would interrupt the reading of a U.S. congressman's letter to his own constituents. This is supposed to be an opportunity for the public to comment. They should not be harassed by postal officials when they are simply trying to express their opinion and hopefully to enlighten the agency about their needs and concerns," said Rahall.

"I ask that you to look into this matter and get back to me," said Rahall in his call to the Postal Service's COO.

"I want to know how these meetings are being conducted in southern West Virginia, and what is being done to address the legitimate safety and convenience concerns of residents and businesses that are being raised at these meetings."

Montgomery News (montgomerynews.com)

Ambler Gazette > News

Postal Regulatory Commission denies resident's petition against closure of Gwynedd post office

Wednesday, August 31, 2011

By Thomas Celona

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Despite efforts by local residents, the Gwynedd post office will not be reopening.

In an Aug. 30 decision, the Postal Regulatory Commission affirmed the United States Postal Service's decision to shutter the branch, denying a petition filed by a Gwynedd resident to have the decision overturned.

The Gwynedd post office, located at 1200 Meetinghouse Road, closed May 27.

The United States Postal Service held a community meeting March 3 about the possibility of closing the branch, packing the meeting room with residents adamantly opposed to the idea. The USPS made its decision to close the branch in a document dated March 14, and customers received notice of the impending closure April 4.

Gwynedd resident Christina Surowiec, writing on behalf of several residents, filed an appeal May 2, asking the Postal Regulatory Commission to review the Postal Service's decision. Surowiec's petition was followed by letters of support from three fellow Gwynedd residents.

In its decision to close the Gwynedd branch, the USPS cited declines in both retail transactions and overall revenue and the traffic access issues posed by the current construction on Route 202.

In her appeal, Surowiec argued the USPS had made its decision with false information and that branch's closure would have a negative effect on the community.

The petition argued the USPS failed to follow the correct procedure for closing a branch, that the station's loss in revenue was due to slashing hours, that the construction on 202 would improve access to the branch and that access at the Spring House location — where the Gwynedd post office boxes have been moved — is dangerous.

After reviewing both the Postal Service's decision and the petition, the Postal Regulatory Commission affirmed the decision to keep the branch closed. It did, however, note some serious concerns with how the USPS conducted the closure.

In its decision, the Postal Regulatory Commission wrote "the Postal Service appears to have minimally satisfied the notice requirements" but reprimanded the USPS for how it went about listening to residents' concerns.

The commission wrote the record suggests "the Postal Service rushed to judgment on this matter without fully considering views expressed at the public meeting. The Postal Service does itself no favors when it leaves the

impression that public participation is not meaningful."

Additionally, the commission noted the USPS did not create questionnaires to solicit opinion from Gwynedd customers.

"This is inconsistent with the way the Postal Service generally handles post office closures," the commission wrote. "... The Postal Service's failure to do so in this instance is a shortcoming."

The commission also wrote residents deserved a "fuller response" to their concerns about access and parking at the Spring House post office.

Despite these concerns with how the Postal Service conducted the closure, the Postal Regulatory Commission determined the reasoning for the closure was justified.

"The Commission concludes that the record indicates that the Postal Service will continue to provide effective and regular service to customers served by the Gwynedd station," it wrote.

With the shuttering of the Gwynedd branch, service to Gwynedd customers is being administered by the North Wales post office. There has been no change in delivery service, while all post office boxes have been moved to the Spring House station, located at 905 Bethlehem Pike.

URL: http://www.montgomerynews.com/articles/2011/08/31/ambler_gazette/news/doc4e5e4e8087436184450185.prt

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